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DEC. 6, 1940

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JAZZ INFORMATION

VOLUME TWO, NUMBER TEN
DECEMBER 6, 1940

What's New in Jazz . . .

JAZZ INFORMATION ENTERS REISSUE FIELD with an initial release of King Oliver's Gennett recordings of Chimes Blues and Canal Street Blues. The record, a limited edition available only to subscribers of the magazine, will be priced at $1.00 and sold only by mail. Full details of the reissue appear on pages 6 and 7 of this issue.

THE SECOND RELEASE OF COLUMBIA HOT JAZZ CLASSICS was scheduled to appear on December 6th. Included in the new batch are a four-disc Duke Ellington Album and six single records. Further releases of one album and several single records are promised on a regular monthly basis.

The new reissues include three sides which were previously unissued: Ory's Creole Trombone - The Last Time, both by Louis Armstrong's Hot Seven, and Bessie Smith's At The Christmas Ball. Coupled with the latter is Bessie's Preachin' The Blues. Also listed are second masters of the Rhythmakers' Oh Peter and Who Stole The Lock with Henry Allen, Pee Wee Russell, et al. Fletcher Henderson's Hot And Anxious - Comin' And Goin', and Benny Goodman's Moonglow - Why Couldn't It Be Poor Little Me, complete the list of individual releases.

The Ellington album consists entirely of second masters, not previously used, with the exception of a version of Merry-Go-Round which was issued in England and France only. Titles in the album are: Lazy Rhapsody - Blue Ramble; Baby, When You Ain't There - Lightnin'; Best Wishes - Bundle Of Blues; Drop Me Off At Harlem - Merry-Go-Round. All except the last were made for Brunswick.

Meanwhile, the release date of the new Bluebird reissues announced in the last issue was advanced. They will be available when this issue comes off the press.

ON THE COVER: SIDNEY BECHET -- whose biography, by Mary E. Karoley, appears in this issue -- at the Blue Note recording session which produced Summertime. Photo by Charles Peterson.

ALBERT NICHOLAS AND MAINZIE JOHNSON JOIN JOE SULLIVAN, at the Famous Door, on December 10. Clarinetist Nicholas replaces Chauncey Haughton, and Johnson will take Eddie Dougherty's place at the drums. Others in the band, which opened at the Door two weeks ago, are Joe Thomas, trumpet; Claude Jones, trombone; Hayes Alvis, bass; and Sullivan, piano. Sullivan, whose present group is all-colored with the exception of himself, was the first to lead a successful mixed band (at Cafe Society).

J. C. HIGGINBOTHAM JOINED RED ALLEN at New York's downtown Cafe Society last week. Higginbotham, ex-Louis Armstrong trombonist, replaced Gene Simon, who played with Allen for a week after Claude Jones left. The band also includes Edmond Hall, clarinet; Ken Kersey, piano; Billy Taylor, bass; and Jimmy Hoskins, drums. Reports that Sidney Catlett would replace Hoskins have so far proved unfounded. Meade "Lux" Lewis and Sister Tharpe have returned to the Cafe after short absence.

COMMODORE RELEASED THREE NEW RECORDS last week. Two of them, by Joe Bushkin (piano solos) and Lee Wiley (vocal with accompaniment by Muggsy Spanier and Jess Stacy), are reviewed elsewhere in this issue The third, a reissue of two sides recorded last year for Varsity and since then unavailable, appears on a new green Commodore label, and is priced at 75 cents. The sides reissued are Shake It And Break It by the Varsity Seven (Benny Carter, Coleman Hawkins, Joe Sullivan, et al., with a Joe Turner vocal) and T-Bone Blues (Yes, I Love You) by Les Hite's orchestra, with blues vocal by T-Bone Walker.

FURTHER CHANGES IN ART HODES' BAND came this week when Duke Duval and Ken Duvallon, trumpet and drums respectively, were replaced by Tommy Gonsoulin and Rollo Laylan. George Brunies and Rod Cless continue with Hodes, who plays dinner music till nine, and Dixieland from ten on, at Childs' Rainbow Room, Broadway and 103rd Street. Laylan was formerly featured with Paul Whiteman's orchestra. Gonsoulin has played with numerous bands, including Gene Krupa's.

HARRY LIM'S SUNDAY AFTERNOON SESSIONS at the Hotel Sherman, Chicago, will be resumed on December 22nd when the Javanese hot fan, his difficulties with the Chicago local straightened out, returns from a flying trip to New York. In Mamaroneck, N. Y., the seventh jam session at Green Haven Inn took place Sunday, December 1. Hot Lips Page, Pee Wee Russell, Don Bias, Joe Sullivan, Artie Shapiro, and Zutty Singleton played the session, with Pete Johnson's boogie between sets. The same group was to return to Green Haven on December 7th.

NEWS IN BRIEF: Tony Costa, sax, has left Bobby Hackett's band and joined Les Brown. Slats Long replaced Costa. Max Kaminsky joined the Tony Pastor trumpet section November 28. Wally Gordon replaced Cliff Leeman on drums with Charlie Barnet. George Wettling is subbing for Hughie Keller in the Johnny Long band at Roseland, New York City. The relief band at the Hotel Edison, New York, consists of Johnny Austin, trumpet; Gabe Galinas, tenor; Morris Raymon, bass; Sanford Gold, piano: and Dave Barber, guitar. Bunny Berigan is booked into the Hotel Roosevelt in New Orleans until New Year's. John Kirby goes into Boston's Hotel Brunswick for a week starting December 9th, follows that with a week at New York's Loew's State and then returns to the Brunswick for

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a week. The West End Theatre, which tried to buck the big name policy of the Harlem Apollo, folded after six weeks. Slam Stewart has been playing dates with Van Alexander's band as featured bassist and vocalist. Socarras' band, with Cecil Scott and Gus Akin, is playing the Boston Beachcomber. Tony Sbarbaro, Original Dixieland Band drummer, is opening at Singapore Sadie's in Florida on December 20th.

NEW YORK

GREENWICH VILLAGE: Red Allen's band now at the Sheridan Square Cafe Society with Meade "Lux" Lewis, Art Tatum, and Willie Bryant. Ida Cox, Sister Tharpe and the Joshua White singers complete the show. Zutty Singleton continues at the Village Vanguard and Lennie Ware's band stays at George's. Bobby Hackett remains at Nick's.

MIDTOWN: Kelly's Stable has Coleman Hawkins band with Billie Holiday and Nat Jaffe. Teddy Wilson, plus Albert Ammons, Pete Johnson, Hazel Scott and Eddie South, keep the Uptown Cafe Society jumping. Joe Marsala's band at The Hickory House, Pete Brown's at Ryan's, and Joe Sullivan's at the Famous Door complete the midtown music pattern. Jack Teagarden starts a two week stretch at the Arcadia Ballroom December 11. Pee Wee Russell is leading a quartet at Billingsley's on Park Avenue in the Forties.

UPTOWN: Art Hodes' Columbia Quintet, with George Brunies and Rod Cless, is at Childs' Rainbow Room, Broadway and 103rd St. Erskine Hawkins continues at the Savoy Ballroom, Maurice Hubbard at Small's, Fred Moore at the Victoria, Wingy Carpenter at the New Capitol. The 125th Street Apollo Theatre has Charlie Barnet for a week starting December 6 followed by Duke Ellington, who opens December 13th for a week.

CHICAGO

Charlie Elgar, of the Relief Benefit Committee of Local 208, has arranged a swing concert for the afternoon of Sunday, December 8, at Bacon's Casino, 49th and Wabash. Several pianists headline the bill. Earl Hines, who is traveling and not expected back by that date, is on the list; making the program appear arbitrary. Others mentioned include Jim Yancey, Bob Zurke, Fats Waller; and high-register trumpet sensation Shorty McConnell, clarinetist Darnell Howard, the bands of Jimmie Noone, Rigsby Saunders, and others.

Fats Waller's small combo and Bob Zurke, soloing intermissions, make vigorous music for the Panther Room. Fats played a Waiters' Ball at the Savoy on November 18, his off night downtown. Krupa will probably follow Waller into the Panther Room in mid-December.

The Regal Theatre has begun negotiations with Harry Lim for his supervision of weekly stage jam features. If the deal goes through Harry will organize small groups of local and visiting boys for three or four Sunday shows, following the successful practices of New York's Apollo. The expiriment may begin in January.

Lil Armstrong has severed connections with the Decca race department. She is now in Chicago, playing nightly for an early morning audience of queers at Tin Pan Alley on North Wabash.

Walter Fuller's orchestra continues at the reopened-but-no-one-seems-to-know-it Grand Terrace.

The Regal Theatre reports Andy Kirk for the week of December 6. Later in the month Lunceford will appear. If Barnet is still in the business in January, his band will appear.

In his most recent recording session Barney Bigard gave a nod to Harry Lim with the tune Lament For Javanette. Two other sides were cut on the same date.

Bob Shoffner is in a trumpet chair with Autrey McKissick's band at the Parkway Ballroom... Wingy Mannone is booked for six months at the Brass Rail.

Christmas Present

To celebrate its second Christmas, JAZZ INFORMATION is proud to announce a special present for its readers. The first of a series of limited-edition reissues of rare hot jazz classics, on JAZZ INFORMATION'S own label, is now available.

Our entry into this field is motivated by the belief that, in spite of the record companies' present awareness of hot music's commercial possibilities, there is still a need for the independent, non-commercial reissue group. Such a group can fill an important function by releasing, even for a limited market, great hot records whose popular appeal is too slight to attract the larger firms.

We are primarily in the publishing business, not the record business. For that reason, sales of JAZZ INFORMATION'S reissues will be confined to our subscribers, and a limited number of records pressed. Thus we will be able to select sides for reissue on the basis of merit rather than saleability. No regular schedule of reissues is planned. Further releases will be announced when they are ready.

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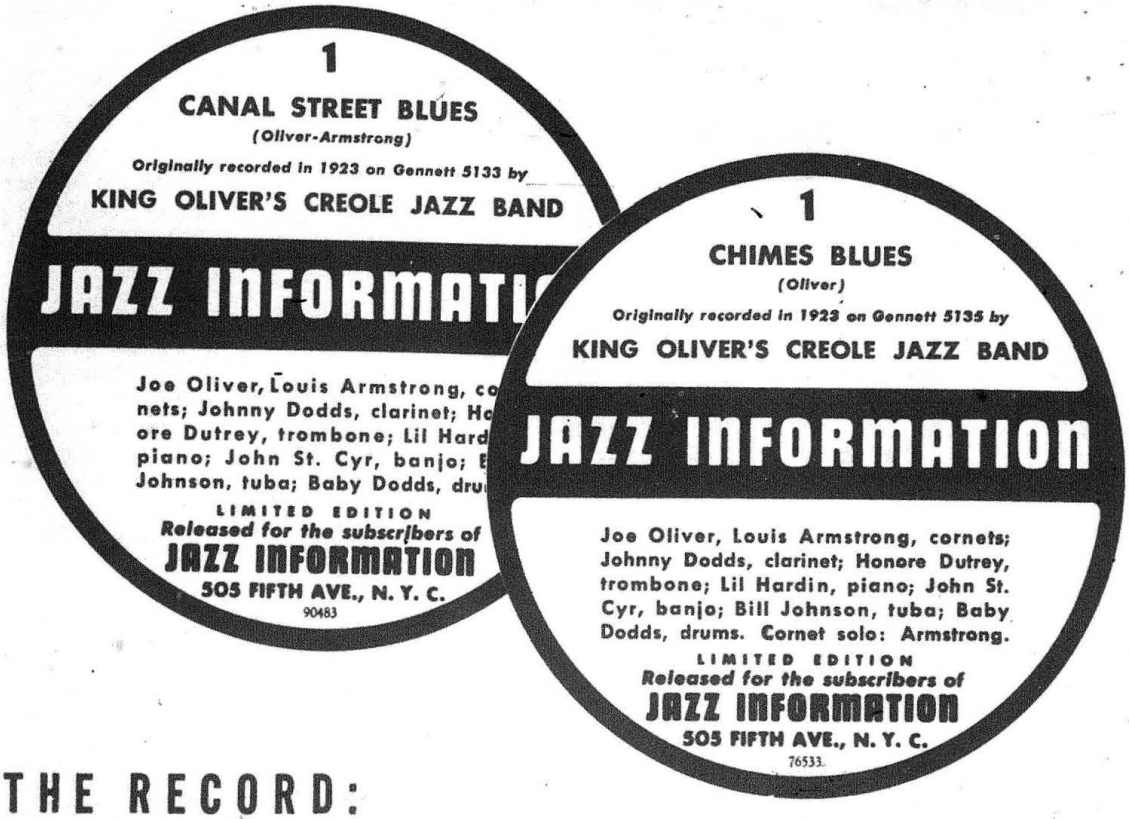
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CANAL STREET BLUES
(Oliver-Armstrong)
Originally recorded in 1923 on Gennett 5133 by
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CHIMES BLUES
(Oliver)
Originally recorded in 1923 on Gennett 5135 by
KING OLIVER'S CREOLE JAZZ BAND
JAZZ INFORMATION
Joe Oliver, Louis Armstrong, cornets; Johnny Dodds, clarinet; Honore Dutrey, trombone; Lil Hardin, piano; John St. Cyr, banjo; Bill Johnson, tuba; Baby Dodds, drums. Cornet solo: Armstrong.
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THE RECORD:

Two of the greatest jazz recordings, Chimes Blues and Canal Street Blues share three points of appeal: their superlative musical quality, their great historical interest, and their extreme rarity.

Playable copies of these two famous sides now bring premium prices. But none of Oliver's Gennetts has ever been reissued in the United States, although many collectors and musicians agree that Oliver's Creole Band was the greatest permanent jazz orchestra which ever recorded.

With the exception of pianist Lil Hardin, all of the members of this group were from New Orleans. Early in 1923, when they made the Gennett records (in Richmond, Indiana), their New Orleans style jazz blasted Chicago's Lincoln Gardens nightly. The Gennetts are among the most powerful recorded examples of the New Orleans combination; with the fabulous cornet team of Oliver and Armstrong leading, the Dodds Brothers playing insurpassable clarinet and drums, Dutrey's fine tailgate backing and St. Cyr's grand rhythm.

The famous Chimes Blues, one of the rarest and best Olivers, contains Louis Armstrong's first recorded solo. The present reissue, made possible through the courtesy of Art Feher of Cleveland, Ohio, makes this celebrated collectors' item available for the first time since its original issue. Canal Street Blues, perhaps the greatest Gennett, was reissued some years ago in Great Britain. Johnny Dodds takes one of the most moving choruses he ever played; more than one clarinetist today still uses the same phrase.

SIDNEY BECHET

by Mary E. Karoley

There has been no prominent figure in the history of jazz whose age has been so grossly misrepresented as Sidney Bechet. It seems to have been the practice of the jazz literati, when it was necessary to mention his age, to determine it by putting fifteen or twenty numbers over 55 in a hat and drawing one out. He has been pictured as a white-haired patriarch who presumably needed a cane to get about; a recent book on jazz mentioned his years authoritatively as 67; and one well-known jazz commentator wrote that it was "inexplicable that a man of Bechet's advanced age could play with such fire and spirit."

Actually Sidney is far from approaching senility. One of the reasons for the misconception, no doubt, is his precocity. Although a contemporary in years of Armstrong, Singleton and Ladnier, he began playing -- and holding his own -- at the age of ten with such men as Keppard, Big Eye Louis and Bunk. When he was eleven (no short pants) he was playing quite frequently at the 101 Ranch in the famous New Orleans red light district as a substitute for George Baquet, who was fifteen years his senior. His association with these pioneers of jazz not only made him one in his own right, but placed him way ahead of the boys his own age in experience.

Bechet was born May 14, 1897 on St. Antoine Street near Rampart, in the heart of the Creole section of New Orleans. He was the youngest of seven children. His first languages were Creole and French -- he learned the latter in school -- and his command of English was imperfect until he was seventeen. His amazingly retentive memory displayed itself early; as a very young child he caused much embarrassment by repeating, word for word, adults' conversations which he had casually overheard.

Most of the Bechets were musically inclined. At the age of four or five Sidney found a douche in the house and went around trying to play tunes on the nozzle. When discovered, he was soundly spanked by his mother and given an old flute to play. He did not care for the flute, however -- "it didn't have enough notes."

The first music Sidney remembers hearing was played by musicians who rode the streets in wagons advertising dances, prize fights, parties, etc. He loved to hear these small bands play, and used to follow the wagons through the streets. When he went to the circus he was always more fascinated by the brass band than by any other part of the show, even the animals and clowns, and he used to stand for hours watching the players go through their maneuvers.

When Sidney was about six, his brother Leonard bought a second-hand clarinet and began taking lessons on it. At the first opportunity, young Sidney sneaked the horn out of its case and began experimenting with it under the front porch. His mother discovered him after his sixth or seventh venture, and he impressed her by playing a tune called I Don't Know Where I'm Goin' But I'm On My Way. The same evening, at his mother's suggestion, he played it for his brother. Leonard was so astonished, and at the same time so disgusted to find the boy's ability was greater than his own, that he gave him the instrument.

Sidney continued his experiments

LITTLE SIDIE

with the horn, making rapid progress. When he was about eight, the Bechet family hired six pieces from Perez' Imperial Band to furnish the music for a lawn party. Perez sent Keppard in his place. When the band started to play on the lawn, Sid took out his decrepit horn and sat in the parlor playing along with them. Hearing the mysterious music, Keppard went to investigate. His expression must have been ludicrous when he got to the parlor and found it was an eight-year-old child who was keeping up with them. Amused as well as surprised, Keppard persuaded Sidney to come outside and play with the band. What a big moment for the kid -- a chance to play with a real band! He was thrilled and excited as he played along with them for the rest of the afternoon.

A year after this incident Sidney managed to get into a Saturday night dance at Economy Hall where the Olympia Band was playing. During one of the intermissions, when the band was out for a drink, George Baquet heard someone playing his clarinet. He rushed angrily back to the stand. Finding a small boy fingering the instrument, he bawled him out soundly. At this moment Keppard, returning to the stand, assured Baquet that the kid could really play, so George let him blow a few tunes when the band began playing again. Like everyone else, Baquet was astounded by the youngster's ability, and invited him to come around to his house the next day.

Sidney became a regular visitor at the Baquet home. George gave him an old clarinet of his own, as well as a clarinet exercise book, and took great pains in attempting to teach him the right fingering. But Sid had already developed his own technique to such an extent that he was never able to change completely to the conventional method. It used to baffle and annoy both Baquet and Big Eye Louis that the kid could turn out the music he did with such unorthodox fingering. Likewise, he made very little progress in sight-reading. He must have realized even at that early age that his own phenomenal memory would serve him far better than any written notes; and accordingly he took little interest in learning to read.

Sid's second public appearance took place shortly after he began taking lessons from Baquet. One of the neighborhood theatres was running an "Amateur Talent" night, and Sidney and another kid decided to take a crack at it. When Sidney's turn came he went out on the stage and did a song-and-dance act. Apparently this didn't go over too well; when the master of ceremonies asked him what else he could do, Sid walked over to the orchestra pit and asked Lorenzo Tio, Sr., whom he knew, if he could borrow his clarinet. He hadn't thought to bring his own. Tio was glad to oblige. Sidney's playing brought down the house and carried off the first prize of twenty-five dollars! To a nine-year-old boy, it must have seemed a fortune.

In 1907 Sid began playing in a small band, the Silver Bell, which his brother Leonard had formed.

Leonard played trombone; Joe Bechet, guitar; Sidney Desvigne, cornet; and Adolf De Massiliere, drums. By this time Sidney was in ill repute with his family because of the style of his playing, which is called hot now but was designated merely as "ratty" in those days. It was a disgrace, among respectable folks, to play or to listen to such music, and Sidney was sometimes cuffed on the ear for his "ratty" style.

He describes his dawning consciousness of the fact that there wrer two ways to play by saying that while some musicians he had heard played a tune so that it sounded pretty, he liked the ones who made him want to dance. Buddy Bolden and his boys, playing an advertising date, had made him hop all over the street. He liked the way such music made him feel, and he played that way himself.

Sidney Desvigne was taking cornet lessons while playing in the Silver Bell Band. Sid proceeded to try to teach him to blow hot. In the process, he became interested in the cornet and decided to learn to play it himself. He liked the horn very much, and was able to make good progress on it.

The Silver Bell was kept busy, playing for lawn parties and dances. Meanwhile Sidney's tone and technique were improving tremendously; he was beginning to develop a stirring vibrato, and to show signs of the expressiveness and imaginative power which have always been identified with him.

In 1908 George Baquet began sending Sidney to substitute for him two or three times a week at the 101 Ranch in Storyville. Sid was plenty thrilled to be playing with Keppard, who was one of his idols; but the move was not without its repercussions in the Bechet household. If the kid was up all night playing, he could hardly go to school at eight the next morning. And his mother was none too happy about the shady (to say the least) environment he was constantly in. Sidney, always resourceful, arranged to have one of his cousins, who was a school teacher, give him his lessons every afternoon; and whenever he was to play at an affair which would keep him out late, Keppard or one of the other older musicians would promise Sidney's mother to see that he got home safely.

BECHET AND GEORGE BAQUET: 1940

With these difficulties ironed out, Sidney was able to plunge whole-heartedly into the musical life of New Orleans, and he became an integral and important part of it. His reputation, of course, had spread considerably, and his services were in great demand. He was tireless, playing hour after hour, night after night, all the while developing that magnificent stamina which is evident to this day.

In 1909, Buddy Petit organized a band called the "Young Olympians", which Sidney joined. It was composed of Petit on cornet, Ernest Kelly, trombone; John Marrero, guitar; Simon Marrero, bass; Arnold De Pas, drums; and a violin player. This was just a kid outfit but they did plenty of playing.

Near the end of 1910, he played for three or four months with the Olympia Band in place of Big Eye Louis Nelson. Shortly after this, Lorenzo Tio, Sr., left the Eagle Band to join the Magnolia Band with Joe Oliver. Sidney, really in big time now, took his place.

He well remembers his debut with the Eagle Band. They all wore caps

with some sort of eagle insignia in front, so Sid took a cap to a local seamstress to be similarly adorned. On his first night with the band he took the cap out of its wrappings and put it on his head with reasonable pride. Then he noticed Frank Dusen, the dour manager, glaring at him,and the rest of the gang laughing and jeering. He soon realized what the trouble was and took the cap off to look at it. The well-meaning seamstress had innocently sewn on a lowly rooster, no doubt considering that one bird was as good as another. It took poor Sidney a long time to live that down!

The Eagle band was nothing more than Buddy Bolden's old outfit when Bunk Johnson and Sidney joined it. The other boys were Dusen, trombone; Danny Louis, bass; Brock Umphrey, guitar; and Henry Zeno, drums.

Bunk knew that Sidney was very fond of group singing, and took him down to Perdido one day to hear a good kids' quartet. Sidney was quite impressed by the singing of an eleven-year-old tenor whose name was Louis Armstrong, and asked the boy to meet him the next day and sing for his family. Louis said he couldn't make it; his shoes were at the shoemaker's and he had no money to get them out. Sidney gave him the money but for some reason or other, Louis never showed up at the meeting-place.

The Eagle Band soon became one of the most popular and hottest bands in town. By 1912 Sidney was hardly ever able to lay his clarinet down; after hours and in the afternoons he and Bunk played at a place in Storyville with the rather arresting and descriptive name of "Few Clothes". They also played at Buddy Bottler's place, where two kids used to hang around Bunk, pestering him to teach them how to play. Sidney recognized one of them as the boy tenor he had heard the year before. When Bunk and Sidney had time to spare, they played in brass bands around town, Sidney also playing cornet.

In 1913, Sidney joined Jack Carey's band uptown. Jack played trombone; Mutt Carey, cornet. The following spring Will Johnson, who was in California, sent for Baquet, Venson and Keppard to join him. They subsequently formed the Original Creole Band on the Coast, and not in New Orleans as is commonly supposed. The vacancies in the Olympia Band were filled by Bechet, Zue Robertson and Joe Oliver. The other boys were Henry Zeno, drums; Willie Marrero, bass and manager; and Freddie Keppard's brother Louis on guitar.

About this time Sidney and fourteen-year-old Louis Armstrong blew their first notes together. Sidney was engaged to do some street advertising and hired Louis and a drummer to play with him. Louis received the magnificent sum of fifty cents for his efforts.

Not long after the start of the European war in 1914, Germany's U-Boat blockade of shipping caused the bottom to drop out of the cotton market. The economic effect on the entire South and particularly on New Orleans, the center of the cotton market, was dire. Things became dull in Storyville. Billy Phillips, manager of the 101 Ranch, had been murdered in a gun fight by the imported New York gangster, Gyp the Blood; and his successor could not make it thrive as it had before. Jobs were less plentiful, and when Bechet's close friend Louis Wade signed up to go to Texas with a stock company, Sidney decided to go along. Clarence Williams was a comedian in the show and Sidney also did a comic act, besides playing clarinet solos. It was at that time that he began taking his clarinet apart and playing on each seperate section. Later, he and Wade joined a carnival touring through all of Texas.

Sidney returned to New Orleans in 1916 and spent most of the year gigging around the town, working various spots in the district. He played with Joe Oliver at the Big 25 (Johnny Lala's place) and at Pete Lala's famous spot on Iberville Street near Morais. He also played with Oliver in a theatre. On one occasion, he played cornet with Louis in a brass band which Petit had gotten up for a parade. One of the pieces assigned to Bechet ended in a very high note, and his ability to hit it made him always in demand for these bands.

When the United States declared war on Germany in 1917, numerous training camps were established around New Orleans and the Government, for obvious reasons, ordered a thorough clean-up of the district. In a few months, all of Storyville's famous spots were closed. This had a drastic effect on the musicians whose chief source of income had been the district. Glowing reports were coming back from the boys who had gone North during the previous slump; and a general exodus of musicians from the city began. One way of getting free transportation North was to sign up for jobs in Chicago, ride up on the work train provided for the purpose, and then skip the assigned job. Among those who reached Chicago in this manner were Sugar Johnny, Herb Lindsey, Lawrence Duy and Roy Palmer.

In the summer of 1917, Bechet signed up with the Bruce & Bruce Stock Company, with Louis Wade, piano, and John Sawyer, drums. He played clarinet and doubled for small parts in the show, which toured through Alabama, Georgia, Ohio and Indiana. In the late fall, when the show reached Chicago, Sidney left it to join the band at the DeLuxe Cabaret, which had Sugar Johnny on cornet; Minor Hall, drums; Lawrence Duy, clarinet and manager; Lil Hardin, piano; Roy Palmer, trombone; and Wellman Braud, bass.

Sugar Johnny was in poor health, and in 1916 he was forced to leave the band. The Original Creole Band was stranded in Chicago at that time with their trombonist, Venson, recuperating from an appendectomy; so the DeLuxe band was able to get Freddie Keppard, the Creoles' star cornet man, to take Sugar Johnny's place.

A few months later Duy got the band a better job at the nearby Dreamland. Keppard, however, stayed at the DeLuxe with a new band which he formed. Sidney and Duy persuaded Joe Oliver, who had just arrived in Chicago, to join them at Dreamland.

Venson, meanwhile, had recovered and got an engagement at the Royal Gardens, an after-hour spot. He had Paul Barbarin, drums; Bill Johnson, bass; and a girl piano player, Lottie Taylor. Bechet and Oliver completed the personnel, doubling at the Royal Gardens each night after Dreamland closed.

One pay-day Sidney got the wrong envelope and discovered that Duy was getting more money than he; so he quit the Dreamland and went back to the DeLuxe with Keppard. In 1919 competition between the night spots was keen, graft was rampant, and it was often a case of the survival of the fittest. When the Royal Gardens closed Sidney went over to the Pekin Cafe with pianist Tony Jackson; but he still played early evenings at the DeLuxe with Freddie. Later the Royal Gardens reopened and Joe Oliver want back with Noone on clarinet.

While Sidney was at the Pekin, he heard a record of Bull Frog Blues by the Six Brown Brothers, a saxophone sextet. One of the Browns played a soprano and Sidney was very interested in the powerful tone he managed to get. Shortly afterward he saw a curved soprano in a pawnshop window and bought it. He fooled with the horn for a couple of weeks, but was unable to get any kind of volume or tone out of it. Back to the hockshop it went, and some time later Sidney sold the ticket to Darnell Howard.

When Will Marion Cook brought his Southern Syncopated Orchestra to Chicago, he heard Sidney playing at the Pekin. Bechet was making less than forty dollars a week from his two jobs, and Cook offered him sixty to join his orchestra -- with a European trip in prospect. Sidney agreed and went to New York with Cook, playing dates on the way. Financial troubles, which developed in New York, caused the postponement of the European trip; in the meantime, Sidney joined Tim Brymn's band at Coney Island. They wore extremely elaborate uniforms and the pay was high -- eighty dollars a week. Brymn's regular clarinetist, Kincaid, had a curved soprano and Bechet was again impressed by its big tone. He realized that the one he bought in Chicago must have been defective, and resolved to buy a good one at the first opportunity.

Cook finally ironed out his contractual troubles and was set to

go to Europe. He was anxious to get Bechet; but Sidney wanted to return to Chicago and played "hard to get". The result was a contract with Cook at two hundred a week, which made him the highest paid talent in the show.

The Will Marion Cook outfit was a concert orchestra of thirty-six pieces, of which twenty were banjos, and its specialty was Negro spirituals and group singing. Bechet was used as clarinet soloist on blues numbers. The orchestra went to London in 1919 and began an engagement at Philharmonic Hall.

One of the first things Sidney did in London was to have a straight soprano made up to his special order. When it was finished, he spent considerable time experimenting with it and was delighted with its full, round tone, and its power and volume in the low register as compared to the weakness of the clarinet. He was conscious of a familiarity, actually an affinity with the horn such as he had never felt with his clarinet, and he realized that from then on the soprano would be "his baby". Almost at once he began using it in the band and Cook had some special arrangements, including Song Of Songs, written for it. It wasn't long after this that the clarinet began to lose its popularity in bands and Sidney was all set with his new sax.

BECHET IN 1918

One of the nightly patrons was the French symphonic conductor, Ernest Ansermet, whose subsequent review of the band in general and Bechet in particular (La Revue Romande, Oct. 15, 1919) is one of the most frequently quoted of jazz commentaries. Another frequent visitor was the Prince of Wales, for whom a command performance was also given at Buckingham Palace. This comprised a vocal quartet accompanied by a few musicians and some clarinet solos by Bechet which were enthusiastically received. Wales personally congratulated Sidney after the performance, and each one of the group received a small medal as a memento of the occasion.

After the orchestra had been in London for about ten months -- they were then at the Coliseum -- Cook began having managerial difficulties. Finally the orchestra broke up, most of the musicians returning to the States.

One of the band, Bennie Peyton, was able to get an engagement for a small group at the ultra-ritzy Embassy Club. Sidney had no particular desire to go back home, so he joined up with Peyton. They played at the Embassy (where they were required to wear tails) for about six months. The Prince of Wales and M. Ansermet came there frequently. From the Embassy, the band went to the Palais de Dance and in the fall of 1920 they left for Paris, playing the Apollo Theatre and later a large hotel restaurant.

In the spring of 1921 Peyton's band returned to London to play at the Palais de Dance. Around Armistice Day of that year Bechet returned to New York and began playing society gigs with Ford Dabney, Joe Smith and an excellent alto player named Brassfield. He met a composer named Donald Heywood, who was writing the music for an all-

colored show. Through Heywood, Bechet got a contract at $125.00 a week to appear in the show, which opened in the fall of 1922. He played a Chinese character part, and soloed on soprano and clarinet. One of the comedians in the show knew a young blues singer, Bessie Smith, and arranged an audition for her in Philadelphia. She clicked at once, was hired, and proceeded to break up the show at every appearance thereafter.

After one of the performances in Philadelphia, Victor Herbert, the composer, came backstage to meet Sidney and express his admiration for his Dear Old Southland solo. A few of the performers from the show, including Sidney and Bessie, appeared at a night club party given by Herbert later in the week. The show played Baltimore and Washington and got back to New York in the early spring of 1923, at which time Sidney and Bessie, with Clarence Williams, made the famous test pressing, I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate.

During the next two years Sidney's activities were many and varied. He participated in the incomparable Clarence Williams Blue Five recordings for Okeh; played with Ellington's orchestra for five months in 1924 during Duke's return engagement at the Kentucky Club; took part in another show, known as the Seven-Eleven; and wrote a number of tunes which he had published, including Pleasure Mad and Foolin' Me.

When the royalties from his songs began to come in, he quit the show and opened a restaurant on Lenox Avenue, which he called the "Club Basha". The title of the place was supposed to be a phonetic version of his name, and no doubt accounts for the many corruptions, both is spelling and pronunciation of his name, which were subsequently noticeable. A good many people still call him "Bash".

In the late summer of 1925 the Club Basha folded up. Sidney went to Europe with the Black Revue. Claude Hopkins led the pit orchestra and Sid, Josephine Baker and Bea Foote were featured in this show, which toured Western Europe playing Paris, Brussels and Berlin. When the show broke up in Berlin in 1926, Bechet joined a band in which Bennie Peyton and Frank Wethers (trombone) played and went to Russia, playing Moscow, Kiev, Odessa and Karkov. Sidney was known in Russia as "The Talking Saxophone" because of the expressiveness of his music, and he was given very good publicity, with life-sized pictures and posters of the "Talking Saxophone" displayed in the cities where he played.

It seems peculiar that two New Orleans musicians of the same age should become acquainted in far-off Russia. But it was in Moscow that Sidney, for the first time, met Tommy Ladnier, who was there with Sam Wooding's band and a big show.

The band returned to Paris, but Sidney stayed in Berlin and gigged around until the Black Revue was re-organized in 1927. He led the show's fourteen-piece white and colored orchestra, composed mostly of Frenchmen, Germans and Cubans. The show toured Greece, Turkey, Italy, Sweden, Egypt, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Spain. It broke up in Munich; Sid got a small band together and played in a cafe at Frankfurt-am-Main. At this time he was appointed American representative at the World's Fair of Music and played a specialty at famous Beethoven Hall -- a signal honor.

In July, 1928, he returned to Paris and played with Noble Sissle's band at Les Ambassadeurs Supper Club. It was in Paris that Sidney saw a double E flat bass sax, of which it is said there are only two in existence, and played it in Sissle's band. The same instrument later came into the possession of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

In 1929 he went to Berlin and got a job in the Wild West Bar of the famous Haus Vaterland, which is a huge building housing six or more restaurants and night clubs. In 1930 Sissle, back in New York, cabled Sidney to come home and rejoin the band. This he did, arriving in New York in March, 1930, and returning to Europe with them the same summer. He left Sissle in Paris and went back to the Haus Vaterland in Berlin for a few

BECHET WITH THE LATE TOMMY LADNIER

months. In the fall the "Black Revue" came to life again and he toured with it for six months through Germany, Portugal and Holland. At Amsterdam he received another cablegram from Sissle to return to the States. Bechet came home for the last time in the winter of 1930-31 and played with Sissle for a while at various New York theatres, and during an engagement at the Park Central Hotel.

In the fall of 1931 Sidney had a disagreement about salary with Sissle and left the band, joining a small group at the Nest Club which included Lorenzo Tio, Jr., on alto and clarinet. Shortly after leaving the Nest, Bechet was sent for by Duke Ellington to come to Philadelphia, where the band was playing, and work with Johnny Hodges on soprano. He stayed there a week, and it is easy to see the Bechet influence on Hodges' soprano solo in The Sheik, which was recorded soon afterwards.

Early in 1932 Tommy Ladnier, with whom Sidney had become quite friendly, left the Sissle band and they formed their own eight piece outfit, opening at the Saratoga Club in Harlem. The job lasted only a few weeks; then they began playing three gigs a week in Jersey City and some in White Plains, with Lil Armstrong, Morris Moreland on drums, and King Edwards, bass.

In the fall of 1932 Sid and Tommy got an engagement at the Savoy and took in a six-piece band with Nixon, Duncan, Moreland and Myers which they called the New Orleans Feetwarmers. In September they made the famous Victor sides, Maple Rag, Lay Your Racket, etc. The Feetwarmers played at the Savoy until the spring of 1933 and then disbanded. Sidney went into Jerry Preston's Log Cabin uptown, with Willie the Lion and a fellow named "Jazz" on drums.

Near the end of 1933 Sidney succumbed to the depression, and decided to abandon the up-and-down life of a musician. He opened a tailor shop at 128th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue and Tommy Ladnier worked with him in the shop, shining shoes. But a year later, when Sissle urged him to come back to the band, Sidney went back. For the next four years he remained with Sissle, touring the whole country. In June 1935 he was mar-

ried to Miss Marilouise Crawford in Chicago.

In October, 1938, he left Sissle once again and opened at Nick's in Greenwich Village, New York; first fronting the Spirits of Rhythm and then with his own small combination. At different times the group included Zutty Singleton and Morris Moreland, drums; Wellman Braud, bass; Billy Moore, Leonard Ware and Jimmy Shirley, guitars.

In the first part of 1939 Bechet left Nick's and could find no good engagement. He played intermittently for several months at the Momart Cafe in Astoria with Willie the Lion on piano and Dinah Taylor, drums. This job with its troubles (union and boss) and unsatisfactory pay (low salary and rubber checks) brought Sidney down; and he was on the verge of giving up music again to open a hash house on Philadelphia's South Street (Bechet is an excellent cook). Those who were so fortunate as to hear him play "the Blues" at the Momart will never forget the way he made his horns talk.

Fortunately a booker lined up an audition for a summer job; Bechet rounded up a group of youngsters and clinched the job. On July first he opened at the Spruceland Inn, Stamford, N.Y., with a five-piece band and worked there until Labor Day. A week later he opened at the Log Cabin, Fonda, N. Y., with the same band and continued there till New Year's.

Immediately after, he formed a new band with Sonny White, piano; Wilson Myers, bass; Charlie Howard, guitar; and Kenny Clarke, drums. This group played a short engagement at Saxie Marshall's in Johnstown, N. Y., and opened at Nick's again in February. Until May they alternated there with Zutty Singleton's six-piece band. During this time, Sidney conducted six or seven of the Sunday afternoon jam sessions at Nick's which Harry Lim organized.

For the next six months Sid had no regular engagement, but was kept busy recording a great number of sides for various companies and playing a series of parties and private dances in Philadelphia and Princeton. In November he returned to the Log Cabin, Fonda, N.Y., for a three month engagement.

One of the happiest occasions in years took place for Sidney when he led a jam session for the Philadelphia Hot Club in the spring of 1940. The Hot Club was kind enough to ask George Baquet, who has a small band in Philadelphia, to participate in the session, and it was with great pride and affection that Sidney introduced his old friend and teacher to a new generation of listeners.

Only in recent years has Bechet begun to receive the recognition that is his due as a pioneer of jazz and one of its greatest soloists. It was certainly he who gave Europe its first taste of authentic Negro jazz; and the years abroad, during which he played with all kinds of musicians of all nationalities and colors, have given him a breadth of experience and adaptability enjoyed by no other jazz musician.

Those who are acquainted with him know that Sidney is not only a brilliant musician but a rich and extraordinary personality. His enjoyment in the creation of music has never been dulled by commercialism; like all true artists, he still finds his greatest happiness in playing. The degree of his genius can be measured by his extraordinarily inspiring influence on the men he plays with.

The last words are Sidney's own. Two decades ago he could only tell Ansermet, in explanation of his style of playing, "I play my own way." Asked the same question today, he gives the same answer: "I express myself in my playing, as I feel the piece." But now he can add, magnificently:

"I've played that way all my life."

Acknowledgement is due Sidney Bechet and George Baquet for their patient help in the preparation of this biography. The photographs are reproduced by courtesy of John D. Reid.

How I Found -

THE UNISSUED ARMSTRONGS

by George M. Avakian

I had left my watch in New York the day before, and when I woke up that Friday morning in Bridgeport I had no idea what time it was. But the sun was pouring in the window, so I got up anyway and went down to the Columbia office.

That's how the unissued Armstrongs were discovered.

For it was only eight o'clock when I got to the office, and like most lazy loafers I didn't want to start before anyone else did. To kill time, I looked through the huge pile of Louis Armstrong contracts which Mr. Seton, Columbia's lawyer, had left in my care to be given to the accounting department. It was mostly legal stuff which I couldn't understand, but an occasional letter from Louis made it interesting.

In the last thick folder was a list of all the titles and master numbers which Louis had recorded and been paid for during 1927 and 1928. One of the selections looked unfamiliar -- then another -- and another -- I realized that they had never been released!

But I had run into this sort of thing before - twenty or more Bessies, for instance, which had been made but destroyed without being used (than God that somehow Cake Walkin' Babies and At The Christmas Ball survived). So I restrained the impulse to get excited.

However, having lots of time, I decided to check up on the numerical Okeh master file, just to be sure. I had gone through it before, but the file cards represented released material only. Any unknown masters were indicated by blank white cards.

I looked up the first number... 80851... and there it was. a white card with nothing on it but the number pencilled in one corner. The room got kind of hot and cold, but I swallowed hard and fumbled for the next number. It was 80864, and when another white card turned up I had to stop for a minute and let the floor settle down. Enough to say that three others followed and Avak was running a gentle 104°.

Wondering if there could be some mistake, I checked against the master inventory sheets. Five again -- but not the same five! There was one in the file card system which hadn't been inventoried, and one in the inventory which wasn't among the file cards. That made six in all -- maybe. Just to be sure, I went down to the master room with one of the boys to pick them off the shelves, and we came upstairs with six beautiful Okeh masters.

Get these six into the Louis album, I thought. But that very Friday was the last day for putting through the initial release of Hot Jazz Classics!

It always works out that way, doesn't it?

A break came on the next Wednesday. A final check-up was made on the titles chosen for the Armstrong album and there was a slight hitch on the couplings selected for Squeeze Me and Knockin' A Jug. "Shove in two other Armstrongs," I was told.

It was too late to make tests of the unissued masters, but by Monday morning they were processed to a stage where I could listen to

(Continued on Page 24)

NEW RECORDS

SIDNEY BECHET Vi 27204
and his New Orleans Feetwarmers

BLUES IN THIRDS

Sidney Bechet, clarinet; Earl Hines, piano; Baby Dodds, drums.

ONE O'CLOCK JUMP

Sidney Bechet, clarinet; Sonny White, piano; Charlie Howard, guitar; Wilson Myers, bass; Kenny Clarke, drums.

The Bechet trio, pared down from the Chicago recording band which flapjacked Blue For You Johnny and Ain't Misbehavin' recently, turns out a superb performance of Earl Hines' classic composition, Blues In Thirds. Simple and beautiful, it consists of two solo choruses by Hines and three by Bechet, solidly backed by Baby Dodds.

In the new version Hines changes the value of certain notes in the theme, the effect being greater suspense and contrast. Behind him, Baby Dodds drums perfectly: a heavy, deliberate beat but with great variety and perfect taste. Hines steals the side, with his best recent recorded work; reminding us that he's still the Father, and suggesting that Victor might do worse than made a batch of solo sides with Earl --- and Baby on drums.

When Bechet takes the lead, he realizes the theme's unsuitability for clarinet. Instead of improvising on it, he merely plays the blues --- resting heavily on Lonesome Blues, which must have impressed him recently when he recorded it for Blue Note. Behind Sidney, piano and drums do a classic supporting job. Hines' use of chords: first one, then two, then four to the bar, leads to a final chorus in which he plays the theme again while Bechet still improvises on the blues. The conclusion is charming; the record, as a whole, a fine example of how well the great old timers can play together under the right conditions.

One O'Clock Jump is very much something else again. We have never cared particularly for the way Sidney plays on jump tunes; but in them, as in everything, he manages to play with convincing enthusiasm. This is a moderately good version of the Basie piece, with solos by Bechet, White and Howard.

LEE WILEY CMS 1507

DOWN TO STEAMBOAT TENNESSEE
SUGAR

Accompanied by Muggsy Spanier, cornet; Jess Stacy, piano.

Miss Lee Wiley, neither a blues nor a jazz singer, sings one blues tune and one classic jazz tune on this new Commodore twelve-incher. Her voice and delivery are pleasant, however, in a sophisticated way; and she is provided with an unusual accompaniment which is, actually, the record's principal interest. Sugar is taken much slower than usual; Muggsy and Jess give Wiley good jazz backing and take a chorus for themselves. But the interesting side is Down To Steamboat Tennessee, an original blues which gets going after the first couple of choruses and offers a really rare thing on record; Muggsy playing muted blues trumpet behind a vocal. (He did it before, on Paramount, but no one knows on which records.) As might

be expected, he plays the old style blues horn, with many phrases reminiscent of Louis' accompaniments. Stacy, on the other hand, plays his "modern" blues piano; but it doesn't clash.

JOE BUSHKIN — CMS 534
Piano solos

IN A LITTLE SPANISH TOWN
BLUE CHIPS

Joe Bushkin's increasing ability as a purveyor of "pretty" jazz piano is shown at its best in his new solo of Spanish Town. Mixing Stacy and Waller influences, but without the swing of either, Bushkin improvises pleasant variations on the pop tune, showing his usual proclivity for new harmonies and delicate shading --- and avoiding for the most part the deadly danger of thin, one-finger playing. His left hand is proper to the style; audible but not heavy.

Blue Chips is the blues, played in the same Stacy-Waller style and without any noticeable feeling for the blues. Most of this side could have been played by Stacy, and better. Which remains Mr. Bushkin's greatest weakness.

BENNY GOODMAN — Co 35810

ROYAL GARDEN BLUES
WHOLLY CATS

Cootie Williams, trumpet; Benny Goodman, clarinet; George Auld, tenor sax; Count Basie, piano; Charlie Christian, bass; Artie Bernstein, bass; Harry Jaeger, drums.

The Goodman Sextet turns up in its new dress, with Cootie on trumpet, Auld playing tenor, and Count Basie featured on piano for the occasion. The presence of Cootie, and the not unexpected addition of some Ellington riffs, make some improvement; but the music is more clever than exciting, the rhythm section very swingless, and the soloists for the most part have

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Best Wishes — Drop Me Off At Harlem
Bundle Of Blues — Merry-Go-Round **

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The Last Time *

FLETCHER HENDERSON
Comin' And Goin'
Hot And Anxious

BENNY GOODMAN
Moonglow
Why Couldn't It Be

THE RHYTHMAKERS
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BESSIE SMITH
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nothing new to say. Cootie, unfortunately, plays growl trumpet instead of open; his growl style is now so perfected that he can turn it out too effortlessly, without drive. We wonder why Count Basie is "featured at the piano". He seems to have been resting throughout the session, except when he was assigned a solo spot; and his "solos" consist of a few notes flicked into each bar.

ARTIE SHAW Vi 26763
and his Gramercy 5—

SUMMIT RIDGE DRIVE
CROSS YOUR HEART

Bill Butterfield, trumpet; Artie Shaw, clarinet; John Guarnieri, harpsichord; Al Hendrickson, guitar; Jud DeNaut, bass; Nick Fatool, drums.

More "smart" music by Shaw's novelty group. Summit Ridge is the blues, God help it, castrated and artfully fancied up to make it palatable to whatever odd babies may be tired of the old way of playing it. Like the Gramercy 5—'s first disc, an unlistenable abomination. Billy Butterfield is the best man in the group, and he'll so well to get out of it before it's too late.

The reverse, a simpler treatment of a pop tune, is slightly better. But the coupling gets the lowest rating our scale affords.

WALTER GROSS BB 10937
Piano solos

CREEPY WEEPY
IMPROVISATION IN SEVERAL KEYS

No use wasting talk on Walter Gross' fine technique and keyboard knowledge; the only important thing is that he's trying to play jazz, and he can't do it. Creepy Weepy is humorously subtitled "A Boogie Woogie Study". It's the kind of boogie that goes back as far as Cleo Brown, or maybe not even that far.

CORRECTION: Hoyte D. Kline was inadvertently omitted from the list of those who helped John Reid compile his Sidney Bechet discography.

Larger Bands

WOODY HERMAN De Album 153
and his Orchestra

BLUES ON PARADE

LAUGHING BOY BLUES
TWIN CITY BLUES De 1801

BLUES UPSTAIRS
BLUES DOWNSTAIRS De 2508

CASBAH BLUES
FAREWELL BLUES De 2582

DALLAS BLUES
RIVER BED BLUES De 2629

CALLIOPE BLUES
DUPREE BLUES De 3500

BLUES ON PARADE
PEACH TREE STREET De 3501

This isn't a blues album really, but a selection of twelve best sides by the Herman orchestra; it happens that more than half of them are blues of one sort or another.

Herman's, the only white band to concentrate on playing the blues, has a number of points in its favor: a sincere feeling for the form, some familiarity with its tradition, good collective relaxation and a couple of good soloists. The best of the latter is trombonist Neil Reid, who plays with an inspiring growl and slide. Fluegelhorn Joe Bishop also has something on the ball, though it gets a bit monotonous. Trumpeters Nelson and Lewis turn in some competent bits; the leader plays some nice blues clarinet when he gets off the Artie Shaw track. The only bringdown is Saxie Mansfield's laughable tenor.

The Herman rhythm section rates special praise. Guitarist Hy White (who shows remarkable solo talents especially in River Bed) is a fine musician; so is Frankie Carlson, whose steady and sparkling drums contribute much of the band's lift. Linehan and Yoder, on piano and bass respectively, work in well.

On the other hand: Woody's singing, a whole-hearted imitation of

Teagarden without the voice for it; the band's tendency toward musical jokes (the "knock knock" game Woody and Carlson play on two sides, for instance); some pointless and noisy ensemble arranging, and sometimes too much striving for effect.

The ten sides are too much; skip Laughing Boy, Twin City, Farewell, Dallas Blues, Blues on Parade and Peach Tree Street. There's some good jazz on the other sides; and River Bed is nearly a fine record.

DUKE ELLINGTON Vi 26796
and his Famous Orchestra

WARM VALLEY
THE FLAMING SWORD

Two complex and skilful pieces of quasi-jazz arranging, these new Ellingtons might as well be considered as such. Flaming Sword envelops bits of Latin-American music -- the figures in the bass, solo spots by trumpet, clarinet, and trombones (Nanton and Tizol) with snatches of old Ellington choruses for the brasses. It's a little too complicated for us. The coupling, Warm Valley, is more successful in both writing and performance. Quite slow, it features a long opening solo by Johnny Hodges' alto; a straight trumpet (Rex?) against saxes, and more flashes of Hodges alto, which also plays the ending. A pretty piece, it lays itself open to the charge of lushness like so much of Duke's work with Hodges.

Both sides were recorded before Cootie Williams left Duke, and after Ben Webster had joined.

Blues Records

LONNIE JOHNSON — I'm Just Dumb
BB 8564 — Be Careful

HUDDIE LEADBELLY
BB 8550 — Sail On, Little Girl
Don't You Love Your Daddy No More

HUDDIE LEADBELLY — Alberta
BB 8559 — T. B. Blues

HUDDIE LEADBELLY — Easy Rider
BB 8570 — Worried Blues

BLIND WILLIE McTELL
De 7810 — Cold Winter Day
Lay Some Flowers On My Grave

Big news this week is the reappearance on records of Huddie Ledbetter, known as Leadbelly and now billed as "Huddie Leadbelly". Leadbelly, folk singer and guitarist, has long been the darling of folk-music experts. He's probably the only blues artist who has recorded an album (of Negro Sinful Songs) and about whom a book has been written. And he's good; no better, perhaps, than Bluebird's other sensational low-down singer, Tommy McClennan; but quite as good.

Leadbelly's talent ranges widely over the extent of Negro music; his work songs, chain gang songs, etc., are familiar. The six new Bluebird sides, however (there are more coming), show his ability as a blues singer only. And the singer's broad experience as compared to McClennan's makes up for the younger man's advantages in greater energy and more engaging personality.

Accompanying himself on guitar, Leadbelly uses the same ancient blues figures that show up also in boogie woogie piano; to create an effective, rolling background. If you've liked McClennan's records, don't miss Leadbelly's.

A more cultivated sort of blues singing is Lonnie Johnson's, which sometimes verges on sentimentality though hardly ever in an objectionable way. Lonnie's singing is good too, and he and a second guitarist provide a varied background; but Lonnie's lyrics, a little citified and sometimes moralistic, contrast with Leadbelly's roughly humorous or powerfully direct verses.

Probably no one will be interested in Blind Willie McTell's record, which seems to have been made a number of years ago. Cold Winter Day is ordinary blues, with guitar accompaniment by McTell's buddy, Curly Weaver. The coupling is an original, sung in hillbilly style and based on the old Careless Love strain.

COLLECTORS' ITEMS

FOUR UNKNOWN OLIVERS!

Four undiscovered Gennett sides by King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band! This startling discovery was revealed to JAZZ INFORMATION by Dick Rieber, nationally known collector now living in Washington, D.C.

As Dick tells the story, he and Jeff Fuller were prowling around a second-hand magazine shop some years ago, when Dick found a dog-eared copy of an old trade journal. In the back was a list of records; under the Vocalion heading was Pine Top's Boogie Woogie.

That put Dick on the scent. He found that the publishers of the magazine had been located in New York City and went to the address given. There the elevator starter told him that the same firm was still going strong, but under a different name.

Dick went up and asked if a file of the trade journal was available. There was one; but it included only the years before hot records were made. A girl in the office knew that the later volumes had been donated to the New York Public Library.

So Dick jumped over to the library and spent about fifteen hours, one week, going through the books. Not all of them, just a few; and hurriedly. It was then that the King Olivers came to light.

The illustration on the opposite page is a photostatic copy of a portion of the record listings in the December 15, 1923, issue of this trade journal. Under the advance record bulletins for January, 1924, it lists the well known Oliver Krooked Blues - Alligator Hop (Gennett 5274) — and two other Olivers, Gennett 5275 and 5276, which are entirely unknown.

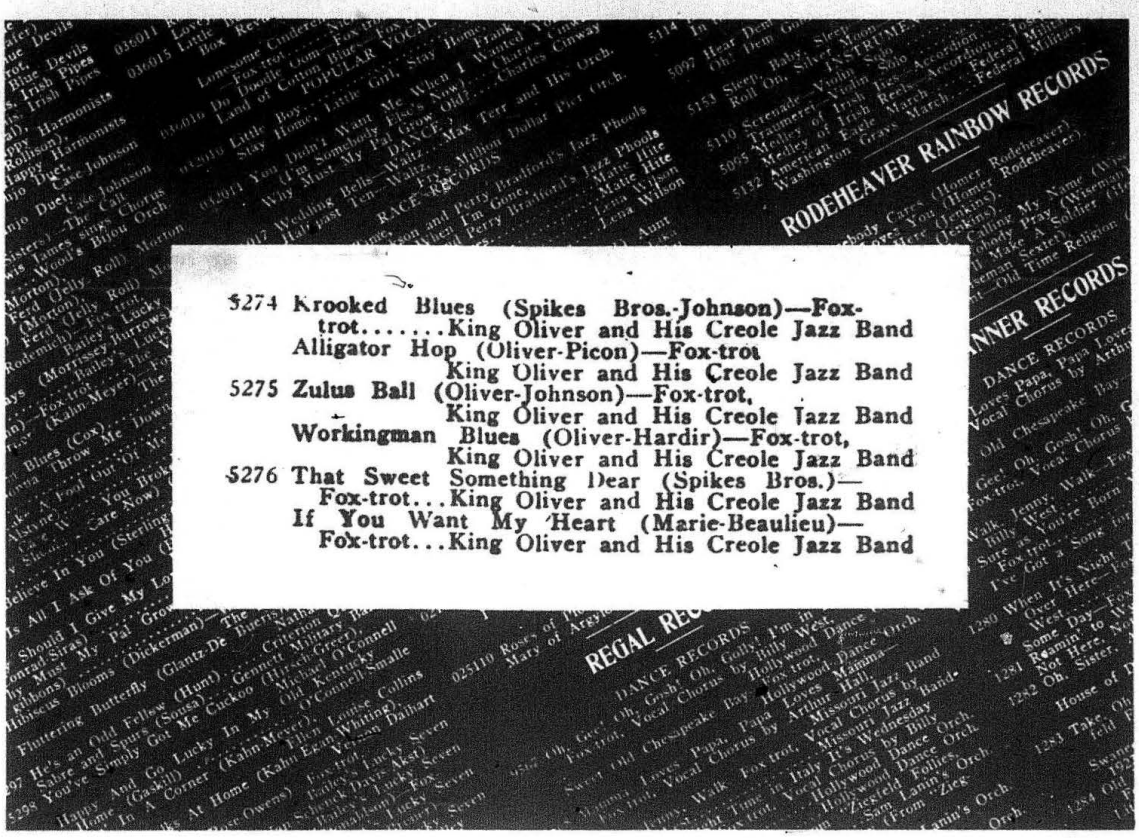
The gap of four master numbers between Alligator and Krooked (11633 and 11638 respectively) had led some collectors to believe that four other sides were made at the session (in Richmond, Indiana, around November 1923). Rieber's discovery proves that these sides were not only made, but actually listed and announced for release.

No one, however, has ever reported finding either of the missing records; proof almost conclusive, after sixteen years, that they were never issued. This might have happened for any of several reasons: defective masters, last-minute rejection, or -- most likely -- the fact that competition for Oliver's recording services had become hot. Many Oliver discs were being issued by other companies, and the Gennett firm, which had been first, may have decided to withdraw from the Creole Jazz Band field.

Whatever happened, the four sides seem not to have been released. Whether a few copies may have been pressed is an interesting question for collectors to ponder. So far as is known, no Gennett masters of this early period have been preserved.

Speculation about the records is idle; but it's worth mentioning that Workingman Blues was also recorded by Oliver for Okeh, and that if the Gennett was as good as the Okeh we've really missed something. That Sweet Something Dear, composed by the Spikes Brothers, was recorded for Nordskog by Kid Ory's Band in 1922. The other two titles speak for themselves: If You Want My Heart probably did not receive very commercial treatment by that band -- and Zulu's Ball, an Oliver-Johnson composition, is strictly jazz material.

The personnel of this second Gennett session was not the same as the first; among other changes, Johnny Dodds did not play clarinet. But the presence of Armstrong's cornet on the four undiscovered sides is almost a certainty.


RODEHEAVER RAINBOW RECORDS
5274 Krooked Blues (Spikes Bros.-Johnson)—Fox-trot.....King Oliver and His Creole Jazz Band
Alligator Hop (Oliver-Picon)—Fox-trot
King Oliver and His Creole Jazz Band
5275 Zulus Ball (Oliver-Johnson)—Fox-trot,
King Oliver and His Creole Jazz Band
Workingman Blues (Oliver-Hardir)—Fox-trot,
King Oliver and His Creole Jazz Band
5276 That Sweet Something Dear (Spikes Bros.)—Fox-trot...King Oliver and His Creole Jazz Band
If You Want My Heart (Marie-Beaulieu)—Fox-trot...King Oliver and His Creole Jazz Band
REGAL RECORDS

A NEW TESCHEMACHER DISCOVERY?

Vague rumors of unknown records by clarinetist Frank Teschemacher seem to be crystallizing at last. During the past two years two previously unknown Tesch sides were discovered and issued. Jazz Me Blues, recorded by Tesch, Rod Cless and Mezzrow with a Chicago rhythm section, was dubbed from a test pressing and released on U.H.C.A. under the name of Frank Teschemacher and his Chicagoans. And the second side of Miff Mole's famous Shim-Me-Sha-Wabble date was discovered among the Okeh masters and released on H.R.S. as Windy City Stomp.

News of a possible third Tesch find comes in a letter to JAZZ INFORMATION from Keith Holst, a collector in Melbourne, Australia. Delving into a record store last October, Holst found what he believs to be the second side of the Jazz Me Blues session. This is Indiana (master number 401035), by Eddie Condon's Orchestra (misspelled Conlon), on Australian Parlophone A-2667.

It is true that Jazz Me Blues was not the only side recorded at the "clarinetists' holiday" date, as George Avakian calls it. Rod Cless distinctly remembers other sides, which are probably lost completely. But Indiana cannot be one of them; simply because it was made for Okeh, while the Jazz Me Blues was a Brunswick recording.

Cless, now playing in Art Hodes' band in New York, says he did not make this Indiana, and doubts that Tesch did, either. Rod and Tesch were rooming together at the time Indiana must have been cut (1928-29, shortly before the Condon Footwarmers session). When the first McKenzie-Condon disc was issued, Rod recalls, they took it home and played it "a thousand times". If Tesch made any other records during this time, Cless believes, he would have known of it.

Against these doubts, consider Mr. Holst's description of the side: "The sequence of solos is as follows: alto, poor vocal, clarinet, clarinet (definitely Teschemacher). The disc finishes with a

scat and clarinet coda. The piano is unmistakeably Joe Sullivan, while the alto might or might not be Tesch, but is in the true Chicago style (reed squeaks and all)."

And George Hoefer, Jr.,who published a similar letter from Holst in his Hot Box in the December 1st Down Beat, reminds us of a remark in Panassie's book: "Our collaborator, Barrie E. Thorne, tells us Eddie Condon remembers that he once made two sides with Teschemacher, Joe Sullivan and Gene Krupa. One of these sides was Indiana and was issued on Okeh."

Further confirmation comes from George Avakian, who reports that the master number 401035 is one of two consecutive numbers left blank in the Okeh files -- which probably indicates the sides were made but not issued in the U. S. Mr. Holst's find is in brand new condition. Steps are being taken to check on it; if it proves to be a Tesch record, it will undoubtedly be made available on a reissue.

The backing on Australian Parlophone is Condon's familiar I'm Sorry I Made You Cry, pressed from a different master than the American version; Teagarden leads the first ensemble,MacPartland remaining unheard until after the vocal.

HINES, BARBEE, JABBO, CLAY

In the Rosenberg-Williams piece on Omer Simeon (JAZZ INFORMATION, Vol. II, No. 1) it was revealed that William Barbee, and not Earl Hines, played piano on the Helen Savage - Dixie Syncopators' Brunswick 4536, It's Bad For Your Soul -- For Just A Little Love For You.

This annihilation of a rare and favorite Hines item called forth protests from some collectors, who refused to believe that anyone but the Father could have played the piano on the Helen Savage disc. For the benefit of these doubters, we are pleased to report that Shirley Clay,who played trumpet on the Savage date and on the Dixie Rhythm Kings' Brunswicks 7115 and 7127, says positively that Hines did not play on either session. The pianist is William Barbee, formerly with Albert Wynn in Chicago.

It still appears true, however, that Hines is the pianist with Simeon on the Brunswick clarinet solos, Beau Koo Jack and Smokehouse Blues. But George Avakian tells us that the first side, as originally made, proved defective and was remade at a later date. So is it just possible that it's Barbee on Beau Koo Jack too?

There was,it seems, one mistake among the record personnels in the Simeon biography. The trumpet on Harry Dial's Vocalion records, previously thought to be Jabbo Smith, is Shirley Clay, according to Clay himself. Shirley wasn't sure that he made all of the Dial's Blusicians sessions, but mentioned Funny Fumble definitely. Hot Discography, of course, is incorrect in listing Hines on piano for the Dials.

The Unissued Armstrongs

(Continued from Page 17)

copper positives. There was a tense moment as the first one began. What if the masters were all Italian tenors singing Pagliacci, or Reverend Gates and his Congregation? But the first two spins of S.O.L. Blues brought relief. Among the rest was 12th Street Rag. I knew there would be no difficulty in clearing authorship and copyright on these two, so they went into the works as the new couplings.

Lucky? Sure. I had been scouring the files for six months; and yet I would have located only two of the six if I had simply checked the master numbers adjoining known Armstrong sessions. The other four are, as George Beall would say, "orphans". They're all alone in the numerical series, surrounded by Sophie Tucker and Sam Lanin's Famous Players.

The discovery of the unissued Armstrongs was, I think, the most exciting thing that's ever happened to me as a record collector. And, best of all, it's a break which can be shared with all record collectors.

READERS' COMMENTS

Berkeley, California...

Here goes a lot of steam. Going back to August 23, in which you say that Chu Berry's tone is not as "full" and well rounded as the Hawk's. That statement alone will utterly discredit you as critics before anyone who knows anything. Coleman H. has the worst, thinnest and most raspy tone ever perpetrated and foisted on to the moronic ear of a "jazz" fan. It varies from poor to just plain lousy, so awful it isn't even music any more. Listen to "Honeysuckle Rose", on which it is fair, then to "Fine Dinner", on which it is godawful I just skriek like his reed and give up in despair. He is not even consistent. IF HE'S SUCH A DAMNED GOOD MAN AND LOVES HIS MUSIC SO DAMN MUCH WHY IN HELL DOESN'T HE STRIVE FOR THE BEST? There's the answer to all the stuff you throw about sincerity etc. Chu Berry's tone is just about perfect.

Look fellows I don't object to your praising Louis or any other jazz man but don't run down good musicians because they don't play what you think is good - - because you don't know a damn thing about what's good anyway. I have heard Louis and Spanier and I will say that Spanier puts so damn much more drive and feeling into it than Louis with the latter's thin piping style. Spanier is my idea of a good jazz man. And if you want to know who can play trumpet and I mean make it sing and do things of rare beauty -- Cootie Williams with

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an open horn above all else. Next come Klein, Elman, James and Stewart. Talk to some trumpet players sometime or better yet play one yourself. And just ask yourself if a guy can be considered sincere if he doesn't strive for the best out of his instrument in tone, variety and effect. Aw hell just forget this and go soak your head.

Lewis Hall

(EDITORS' NOTE: Go soak your head, Mr. Hall.)

New York City...

I have noticed recently that, although your magazine continues to announce blandly that it appears every other Friday, it is actually published every three or four weeks. Don't you think a peculiarity of this sort should be explained to your subscribers? I do.

Clifton Cuthbert

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. Cuthbert's complaint is one of several recent inquiries about our schedule.

We might point out that JAZZ INFORMATION is not, as Mr. Cuthbert says, published every three or four weeks. It appears every two weeks; the only exception to this rule occurred when our seventh issue in the new format was dated three weeks, instead of two, after the previous issue. Recent issues have appeared several days after the announced date of publication; but still at intervals of two weeks. And each of these late issues included the latest news and record reviews available when it went to press.

Like other photo-offset magazines published by an understaffed and an unpaid board, we find it impossible to keep an exact schedule. Unlike other magazines, JAZZ INFORMATION is mailed to all subscribers, at once, the same day we receive it from the binders.

The editors of JAZZ INFORMATION have always believed our readers prefer a good issue, no matter when it may arrive, to a sloppy and incomplete one which might arrive on the dot. We do not, however, underestimate the flattering anxiety subscribers feel when Friday goes by without the new issue's appearance. We admit this is a serious flaw, and we intend to correct it. But is't not as bad as Mr. Cuthbert would have us believe.)

Detroit, Michigan...

How about writing some biographies or articles on Teagarden, Mannone, Goodman or Hackett? I've read so much about New Orleans, Memphis and Kansas City that I'm starting to play 4/4. (I never thought I'd get that low!)

Please let your present record reviewer continue with K.C. and N.O. reviews but get somebody who knows something to review white jazz! Anybody that says Teagarden's chorus on "Peg O' My Heart" is just an agreeable chorus doesn't know C# from Db.

Frank Gillis

Abergavenny, England...

Might I lodge a reasonable complaint regarding your policy of allowing personal preference to influence JAZZ INFORMATION to such a marked and increasing extent? I refer to the way in which less and less is being said about such men as Bix, Tram, Nichols, Mole, Rollini, MacPartland, Livingston, Pettis and the rest of the better white jazzmen. What about it? Cannot you realize that some people can have just a little too much talk about New Orleans style? J.I. is lousy with just that!

Ralph Venables

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